

## SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, September 14, 2015

### MINUTES

Attending:

*Councilor Terry McAvoy*

*Mayor David Ryder*

*Councilor Dennis Marble*

*Town Manager Angus Jennings*

*Councilor William Shakespeare*

*Councilor Stephen Wilde*

*Councilor Greg Sirois (arrived 6:10 p.m.)*

*Chairman McAvoy called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.*

1. **MINUTES – August 10, 2015** – *Motion by Councilor Marble, seconded by Mayor Ryder, to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2015 Services Committee meeting with no changes. Unanimous vote in favor.*
2. **OLD BUSINESS** – *None.*
3. **NEW BUSINESS**
  - a. **Interview with applicant to serve on Board of Trustees, Lura E. Hoit Memorial Pool – Marsha Richardson** – *The Committee noted Ms. Richardson's statement of interest to serve on the pool board. Councilor Marble expressed appreciation for Ms. Richardson's interest in serving the community, and Councilor McAvoy agreed. By unanimous vote, the Committee recommended that the Town Council appoint Marsha Richardson to serve on the Pool Board of Trustees.*
  - b. **Recreation Plan 2015: presentation and discussion – Shelley Abbott, Recreation Director; and Recreation Committee** – *Recreation Director Abbott presented an overview to the Committee of the process, timeline and objectives of the work leading to the recent publication of the 2015 Recreation Plan. Work has been underway since February, with regular working meetings of the Recreation Committee beginning in March. The process included active engagement with park user groups, and affiliated programs (i.e. Bronco Travel Soccer, etc.). The Recreation Plan includes information regarding current facilities and programs, participation rates and trends, and statements of Goals and Objectives for recreation programs. Ms. Abbott invited questions of the Council.*

*Councilor Marble said that the report was very well done, and has a lot of educational content and useful demographic information. He spoke about the potential need for ball fields, and for programs serving both youth and senior citizens. He suggested that the Plan should include a one-page list of bullet point priorities in order to focus discussion, and recommended coordinated planning with the Schools.*

*Ms. Abbott expressed that she has been working with the RSU22 Adult Education group, but that the Recreation Department program guide is only sent out by email (with hard copies available for pickup). RSU22 does promote Rec Department programs.*

*Councilor Marble asked whether planning between School and Rec Department facilities could happen together.*

*Jason Sharpe, a member of the Recreation Committee and a member of the RSU22 School Board, indicated that a vibrant partnership exists with the school, and that the need for fields has been solved temporarily. He said that Ms. Abbott has been great. He feels that some High School facilities are underutilized but groups have been operating in silos and this takes time to change.*

*Councilor McAvoy pointed out the project list on page 17 of the Recreation Plan, specifying the inclusion of renegotiating a lease extension for the Skehan Center. He noted the language indicating that the Skehan Center programming is “paid entirely through user and rental fees of the Recreation Department,” and asked Ms. Abbott whether this was true. Ms. Abbott said that it was. Councilor McAvoy indicated that he felt that this implies that the Skehan Center is financially self-supporting, and he doesn’t think this is the case. He asked what other revenues are counted. Ms. Abbott referred to the Recreation Enterprise Account.*

*Councilor McAvoy asked whether Kids’ Korner is considered part of the Recreation Department. Ms. Abbott answered that it is, and always has been.*

*Councilor McAvoy asked about the amount of financial shortfall incurred by the Skehan Center, looking only at revenues and costs from that facility. Ms. Abbott did not have accounting records with her, and indicated that all FY15 numbers are tentative until receipt of the report from the Town’s independent auditor, but estimated that, for FY15, the amount was about \$45,000. In the current fiscal year, we’re showing a positive financial situation. All of the funds from summer programs were put into the General Ledger account, which was a change from prior fiscal years.*

*Mr. Sharpe introduced the analogy of running a business, stating that businesses don’t often turn a profit during their initial three years of operations but that they get better over time. He feels that the Skehan Center is an integral part of the recreation programming, and believes that with increased staffing the Department could run more programs and generate more revenues.*

*Councilor Sirois expressed his opinion that Recreation Departments in any town cannot be expected to support themselves financially. The amount of*

*funds allocated to recreation through the town budget result in a public service and a greater good.*

*Councilor McAvoy indicated that, when the Skehan Center lease was signed, the Council was told that the facility would pay for itself and it's never been true as the facility has drawn \$40-50k per year from the Enterprise Account.*

*Mr. Sharpe expressed interest in seeing the accounting of these funds.*

*Councilor Shakespeare did not recall saying that the Skehan Center would pay for itself, and expressed his opinion that recreation programs represent a public service that is valued by people living in Hampden.*

*Councilor Wilde said that the recreation programs offered in Hampden were one consideration in his family's decision to move to Hampden years ago. Councilor Wilde commended Ms. Abbott and the Recreation Committee for a fantastic job with the Recreation Plan, and indicated that he's not aware of any town recreation program that turns a profit.*

*Nancy Fenders said that we need to look at recreation holistically.*

*Councilor Shakespeare thanked the Committee, and Ms. Abbott, for their hard work and dedication.*

*Jane Jarvi indicated that the number of participants in the recreation programs, as reported in the Recreation Plan, speaks to the quality of the programs. She expressed that recreation programming offers many intangible benefits to the community, such as keeping children active and engaged in healthy activities. She thought Councilor Marble's suggestion of a page of bullet point priorities was a good one.*

*Mr. Sharpe indicated that there has been a strong partnership in the past six to nine months between the Recreation Department, Schools and sports travel programs. He suggested that it would be a plus to have the Council's Services Committee involved with this work. As an example of how recreation programs benefit the local economy, he spoke about 21 home soccer games to be held on October 4, and the likelihood that this will lead to a lot of pizza and coffee purchases.*

- c. Request to use Recreation Clearing account funds - \$4,215.00 for Boiler Rooms Door Replacement at Skehan Recreation Center; and \$7,455.82 for purchase of replacement mower – Recreation Director Abbott**  
*presented the requests for funds, and indicated that she has been in close coordination with DPW Director Sean Currier. The mower is requested for funding out of the Recreation Clearing account because the equipment would be used nearly 100% of the time on town recreation facilities. The current*

*mower has 1900 hours on it and is near the end of its useful life, and DPW has been unable to secure funds for a new one.*

*Councilor Marble advised Ms. Abbott to ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer sign off on the boiler room door installation. He expressed that \$7,500 seems like a lot for a mower. Councilor Sirois indicated that, for a commercial grade mower, this appears to be a reasonable price.*

*Councilor Shakespeare recalled that this item was discussed at the Infrastructure Committee two years ago but wasn't funded at that time.*

*Mayor Ryder asked about the funds balance in the Recreation Clearing Account. Ms. Abbott indicated that the balance is approximately \$74,000, and that additional amounts of approximately \$20,000 and \$10,000 were expected to be added to this amount pending the outcome of the auditors' report.*

*Mayor Ryder asked why multiple bids were not sought for the requested items.*

*Councilor McAvoy suggested that this request be forwarded to the Infrastructure Committee meeting on September 28. He also requested to read the Skehan Center lease. He expressed concern about replacing doors that have been there for decades when the town has only been in the facility for two years.*

*Councilor Shakespeare agreed that multiple bids should be sought, and asked whether the mower purchase could wait until spring.*

*Ms. Abbott asked whether, if it's referred to Infrastructure, it could then (upon their recommendation) go right to the Town Council. Councilor McAvoy indicated that it could.*

*The request was referred to the September 28 meeting of the Infrastructure Committee.*

- d. Request for access to Papermill Park for installation of weir for eel research – Joseph Zydlewski, U.S. Geological Survey Maine Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit** – *The request was reviewed. Councilor Marble indicated that he'd like to ensure a reasonable warrantee is in place against any potential damage to town property. Councilor McAvoy indicated that he would like to receive documentation that the requested work has obtained all necessary permissions from state agencies.*

*Councilor Sirois made a motion to allow Joseph Zydlewski vehicular access to and from the stream for the purpose of installing the weir, and to access*

*the site twice daily for monitoring, and to install educational signage. Councilor Marble seconded.*

*Councilor McAvoy asked about indemnification against damages.*

*Councilor Marble would like Town Manager Jennings to draft a contract specifying terms under which the permissions would be granted, including provision of required permits and indemnification against damages.*

*The motion was recommended by a vote of 6-0.*

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None.**

**5. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS – None.**

*There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted –

Angus Jennings  
Town Manager